

**National Ambulance  
BME Forum**



# Ramadan Guidance

Working to improve the  
experience of Black and Minority  
Ethnic Staff and communities

**Supporting staff and providing care  
to our communities during Ramadan**

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# Ramadan Mubarak!- Message from the chair



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Ramadan Mubarak to all that celebrate it. We are indeed very honoured if we get the chance to celebrate this wonderful month. Our thoughts are with all the people around the world participating in Ramadan.

Being part of diverse communities is an absolute pleasure as this wonderful melting pot of opportunities offers us chances to learn from one another. Race and faith are often closely linked and can play an important part in the lives of many of our diverse communities. As a service we should make time to learn and understand more about the people we work with and the communities we serve.

Festivals like Ramadan, as well as Easter, Vaisakhi and Passover fall in the same months as Ramadan this year. Some of these celebrations involve fasting.

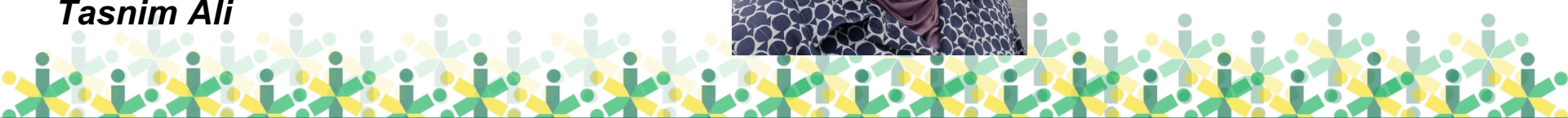
Vaisakhi- - 14 April 2023

Easter- 9th April 2023

Passover- 5th – 13th April 2023

Have a wonderful Ramadan

***Tasnim Ali***



# Ramadan: Frequently asked questions



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## What is Ramadan?

Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic lunar year. It is a month of fasting, a duty upon all adults and healthy Muslims. In the UK, Ramadan may start on **Wednesday, March 22<sup>nd</sup>** but is dependant on the sighting of the new moon.

Fasting during the month of Ramadan is one of the five pillars of Islam. Muslims believe that fasting has both physical and spiritual benefits, including purifying the soul, inspiring self-reflection, and increasing empathy and good works.

## What is a fast?

The fast lasts between dawn and sunset. It is a total fast with complete abstinence from all food and drink. By restricting the body's appetites during daylight hours, Muslims rejuvenate their spirituality, repair their religious conscience, and cultivate their devotion to God

## Is everyone required to fast?

Some people are exempt from fasting, these include:

- pregnant and menstruating women
- lactating women who have concerns about their own or their child's health.
- children
- the elderly and infirm
- those who are ill
- individuals travelling long distances.

**In many cases, exempted persons and other people who may be vulnerable, such as people with diabetes and older people will want to fast. It is a very special time where Muslims will want to be a part of this time of reflection and consideration.**



# Ramadan: Frequently asked questions



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## Why is charity important in Ramadan

Charity is also an essential part of Ramadan, with many Muslims donating to organisations, volunteering and feeding the poor. It is considered a way to gain blessings and purify oneself. Charity emphasises the importance of compassion, generosity, and helping those in need, highlighting the significance of this aspect of Ramadan.



## What happens when Ramadan ends?

The end of Ramadan, which lasts for 29 or 30 days, is marked by the festival of Eid-UI-Fitr. Eid al-Fitr is celebrated as a time of joy and thanksgiving. Some of our Muslim staff members will wish to take leave from work.

The actual day that Eid falls on will depend on when the new moon is sighted and for this reason it might not be possible for the staff member to be very specific about the day they would like to be away from work and therefore some flexibility may be necessary.



# What do observers do?



With over 1.9 billion Muslims across the world, not everyone observes Ramadan in exactly the same way, but there are some commonalities. Although most observant Muslims fast for Ramadan, it's important to not make assumptions that every Muslim you meet has the same methods, traditions, and attitudes towards fasting. For most, Ramadan is more about prayer, reading the Qur'an, and performing acts of charity than merely about forgoing food and drink. Key observances include;

**Refrain from eating or drinking (even water) daily from sunrise to sunset**, (approximately 14 hours a day). Through not eating, people are encouraged to think of the less fortunate who are often without food. It is a time for reflection.

**Wake up early for "Suhoor"** to eat something before fasting begins – just before the morning prayer, (around 4.30am).

**Celebrate "Iftar", the breaking of the fast** at sundown. People will tend to eat a date or drink water to break their fast. Friends and family may also attend to break their fasts, there is great reward in offering food to those that are fasting.

**Give money, food and time to charity** and people in need. Your good deeds are multiplied in Ramadan

**Reflect**, pray, and read verses of the Quran, and under usual circumstances visit the mosque to worship as a community for Tarawih prayers. Each of these actions attracting multiple rewards



# Meeting peoples' needs



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First and foremost, Ramadan, is a special time for Muslims, and the appropriate way to express best wishes to a Muslim colleague or patient for Ramadan is to say: “**Ramadan Mubarak**”. Similarly, you can express best wishes to a Muslim colleague or Patient for Eid by saying “**Eid Mubarak**”

Being equipped with the necessary information in relation to Ramadan supports clinicians to provide the best possible care that considers a persons specific needs, as well as allowing patients to make informed choices.

If you need to understand the specific needs of a patient in relation to Ramadan, ask them. If there is a communication barrier please use telephone interpreting services and any other available communication tools to aid communication.

Knowing this information will allow clinicians to consider the particular needs of patients when providing medical interventions, care and advice. When approaching the issue with Muslim patients, it is important for healthcare professionals to provide an acknowledgement to the fast e.g.

- *“I understand that it is Ramadan, are you fasting at the moment?”*
- *“I would like to be able to... I believe this may/may not break your fast (where applicable)... are you comfortable with this?”*

Where Muslim patients refuse treatment, even though it may not break the fast, the patient's choice should be respected and advice should be offered on medical grounds.



# Impact of fasting on clinical assessments



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## The fast will break when:

- Eating or drinking intentionally
- Taking oral medication
- Providing nourishing medication (also by intramuscular or intravenous injections)
- Smoking

## Clinical interventions that would break the fast include:

*\*this list is not exhaustive*

- Using Aspirin
- Glucagon (IM)
- Glucose drip (IV)
- Glucose drinks

## The fast will not break when:

*\*Caution this will be open to the patient's interpretation.*

- Administering injections (Subcutaneous, subdermal, intramuscular, interosseous, or intra-articular injections for non-nutritional purpose)
- Taking bloods (thumb pricks or intravenous)
- Using inhalers or eye and ear drops
- Eating or drinking unintentionally

## Clinical interventions would not break the fast include:

*\*this list is not exhaustive*

- GTN (Glyceryl Tri Nitrate)
- Treating wounds
- Rectal Diazepam
- Nebulisers and Oxygen
- Ventolin sprays / Salbutamol
- Saline infusion (IV)
- Morphine (IV)
- Diazepam
- Adrenaline
- Penicillin (IV)

# Working and Ramadan

Working has a great importance and value in Islam. The importance of earning a living through lawful means is emphasised in the Qur'an.

## Should I tell my colleagues that I am fasting?

It is better to let your colleagues and managers know that you are fasting. They may be wondering why you aren't eating and not your usual self.

By discussing it with your manager, you may find that they are willing to consider a flexible working arrangement such as an early start, early finish, a shorter lunch or something else which will help you during the month of Ramadan. It's also an opportunity to start a conversation and increase awareness and understanding.

## How do I manage fasting at work?

- **Plan your leave wisely:** Whether it's to book time off during Ramadan or for Eid-ul-fitr, planning your leave early is important.
- **Eating well:** Eating healthily and drinking lots of water [between sunset and sunrise] will help boost your energy.
- **Meal breaks:** If you are scheduled a meal break and you are fasting, consider alternatives to eating - try and find a quiet space for a power nap, or consider going for a walk.



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*Eating well during Ramadan is really important to help maintain energy levels through the day. Give this simple Dairy free date shake a go!*

## Ingredients

- 2 frozen bananas
- 8 pitted medjool dates
- Cinnamon- 1/2 tsp
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- Almond Milk- 1 cup

Simply add all ingredients to a blender, and blend away until smooth and creamy!





# Guidance for Managers



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Managers need to be aware of the importance of 'being part of Ramadan. This could lead to placing a different demand on Trust services in areas where there are high density ethnic minority Muslim populations.

Managers also need to consider the impact of Ramadan on staffing and exploring ways to accommodate Muslim staff needs. Consideration should be given to allowing breaks at different times of day to support Muslim staff.

## Other considerations Managers should take into account:

- Be aware of the increased risk to wellbeing of operational staff who are fasting due to the need to wear increased PPE.
- Consider sensitively any requests for annual leave or shift swaps for Eid-ul-Fitr, which this year will fall on or around the **21<sup>st</sup> April**.
- People may be more tired and lack energy due to the lack of food and water, and broken sleep patterns. Consider agile/ flexible working or changing shift rotas to accommodate tiredness.
- Support people to break the fast where possible at the required time. **This year this will be around 19:00 at the start of the month extending to 20:30 by the end of Ramadan.**
- Allowing time off to pray, especially at sunset.
- Allowing meal breaks at different times, if possible - for example lunch break at dusk, initially to coincide with breaking the fast.
- Consider providing a designated space for prayer and reflection, during the current pandemic this could be even more important to staff wellbeing.
- Be aware that due to different schools of thought you may also find that Muslim staff may not all begin fasting or celebrate Eid-ul-Fitr on the same day.



# Balancing religious identity and operational demand



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All requests based on religious identity and practice should be considered and balanced against operational need.

As a supportive employer and proactive service provider, it is good practice to accommodate these requests wherever possible. Accommodating religious beliefs and practices does not mean allowing extra time off – it is about being flexible about employees' existing holiday entitlement, working patterns or break periods.



# Additional Information



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Several organisations have developed useful guidance to help both staff and managers during Ramadan.

- Muslim Council of Britain
- Muslim Friendly Employers
- NHS Muslim Network
- Diabetes UK



**DIABETES UK**  
KNOW DIABETES. FIGHT DIABETES.

